

LEGAL NOTICE

NEWS AND INFORMATION

WAYNE NATIONAL FOREST INVITES COMMENTS ON FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT TO INCREASE TRAIL ACCESS

TO PUBLISH SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

Forest Supervisor Carrie Gilbert of the Wayne National Forest (WNF) invites comments during a 30-day combined scoping and comment period on a proposal to amend the 2006 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) by removing a standard that restricts the trail season. The standard requires trail closures to off-highway vehicles, mountain bikes, and equestrians from December 16 – April 14 annually. Removal of the Forest Plan standard allows Responsible Officials to determine the appropriate closed period for mountain bike and equestrian trails every year based on conditions at that time. The closure for mountain bike and equestrian trails is expected to be the first Monday in January – first Friday in April but may be adjusted annually based on conditions and volunteer engagement.

For off-highway vehicle trails the proposal establishes a new, closed season that aligns with the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's seasonal closure. Currently, that is the day after the end of deer gun season to March 31, but it may be adjusted in the future.

This proposed action may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation under 36 CFR 220.6(e)(16) – Land management plans, plan amendments, and plan revisions developed under 36 CFR 219 et. seq., that provide broad guidance and information for project and activity decision-making.

This notice a) provides notice of initiation of a plan amendment for which an EIS is not prepared (36 CFR 219.16(a)(1)); b) provides notice that the proposed plan amendment is available for public review and comment (36 CFR 219.16(a)(2)); and c) indicates which of the substantive requirements of 36 CFR 219.8-219.11 are directly related to the amendment. The directly related substantive requirements are "Social and Economic Sustainability (36 CFR 219.8(b)(2), (3), and (6)) and "Multiple Use" (36 CFR 219.10(a)(10) and 36 CFR 219.10(b)(1)(i)). These notices are combined, consistent with 36 CFR 219.16.

Please make your comments to Rachel Reed at the Wayne National Forest, 13700 US Hwy 33, Nelsonville, OH 45764, specifically to the Scoping and Comment Period for the Trail Seasonality Forest Plan Amendment. Acceptable methods of delivery of comments include mail, in person (same address), phone (740-753-0101), fax (740-753-0119), or electronically (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/wayne/landmanagement/projects> then select the project name and select the "Comment on Project" link in the "Get Connected" group at the right hand side of the project webpage). Business hours are currently Mon-Fri, 8:00am-4:30pm, but are subject to change due to Covid. Please include your name, address, phone number, and signature. More detailed information can be found at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/wayne/landmanagement/projects> and in print form upon request.

Only those who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity during this 30-day public comment period are eligible to file an objection in the future. Each individual or representative from entities submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project must sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Comments must be filed or postmarked within the 30-day comment period, with the day following publication of this notice in The Athens Messenger as day 1. If day 30 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday the next Federal business day will mark the close of the comment period. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. This notice is being published in compliance with 36 CFR 219 Subpart A and B regulations.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and may be available for public inspection.